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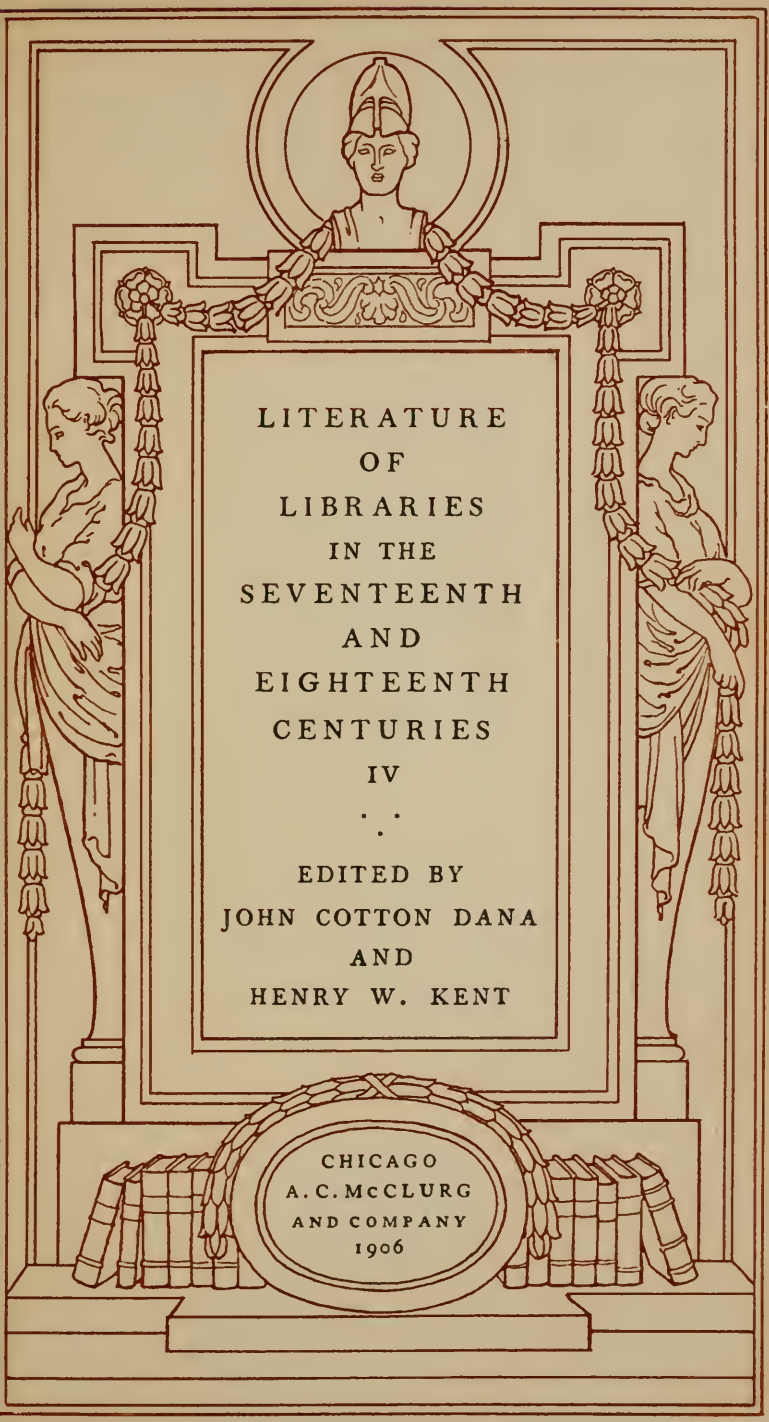

LITERATURE OF LIBRARIES IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

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EDITED BY
JOHN COTTON DANA
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TWO TRACTS ON THE FOUNDING AND MAINTAINING OF PAROCHIAL LIBRARIES IN SCOTLAND

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TWO TRACTS ON THE FOUNDING AND MAINTAINING OF PAROCHIAL LIBRARIES IN SCOTLAND

BY

JAMES KIRKWOOD

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NOTE

NOTE

"AN Overture for Founding and Maintaining Bibliothecks in every Paroch throughout the Kingdom" was published anonymously in 1699; *the original is now a tract of great rarity. In* 1889 *William Blades reprinted it in facsimile from a copy in the Wigan Public Library. This first tract or "overture" is traced to Kirkwood by means of a second tract, entitled "A Copy of a Letter anent a Project for Erecting a library in every Presbytery, or at least County in the Highlands. From a Reverend Minister of the Scots Nation now in England." The author of these*

tracts, James Kirkwood, was born about 1650 *at Dunbar, Scotland. He was graduated in* 1670 *at Edinburgh University, receiving the degree of M.A. He served John Campbell, Earl of Caithness, as domestic chaplain till May* 12, 1679, *when he was presented by the earl to the parish of Minto. He refused to take the test, and was deprived of this benefice November* 1, 1681, *and removed to England, where he was instituted to the rectory of Astwick, Bedfordshire, March* 1, 1685, *through the favour of Bishop Burnet.*

During his life in the Highlands with the Earl of Caithness' family, Kirkwood had been much impressed by the great ignorance

on the part of the Gaelic people of the scriptures and of all writings, and in 1690 *he began a correspondence with Hon. Robert Boyle on the subject; he succeeded in distributing over three thousand copies of the Bible in Irish in the north of Scotland. Following this work he published the first tract mentioned above. Under the plan therein the parish minister's private books were to form the nucleus of each library, the parish schoolmaster was to be the librarian, and the classification of the work was to be uniform throughout the country. The General Assembly approved the scheme, but did nothing toward carrying it into effect. In Girwod's "Catalogue*

of Scottish Writers," Kirkwood is credited with having established a library for the clergy in the Highlands in 1699.

On March 4, 1703, *Kirkwood was elected a corresponding member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and on November* 11*th following were read at one of their meetings: "Letters and papers from Mr. Kirkwood relating to the erection of lending libraries in the Highlands." The only further references to Kirkwood that can be traced are that on January* 7, 1702, *he was ejected from the living of Astwick for "neglect in not abjuring according to the statute* 13 *and* 14 *of William III," and that at his*

death, in 1708, *he left his books and papers to the presbytery of Dunbar.*

The editor has made no attempt to alter the spelling of the two tracts, but he has undertaken to set right the compositor's numerous blunders.

TRACT THE FIRST

AN OVERTURE FOR ESTABLISHING OF BIBLIOTHECKS IN EVERY PAROCH THROUGHOUT THIS KINGDOM

IT is as essential to the nature of Mankind to be desirous of Knowledge, as it is for them to be rational Creatures, for we see no other end or use for our Reason, but to seek out and search for the Knowledge of all these things of which we are Ignorant. For *this sore travel hath God given to the sons of men, to be exercised therewith.* That being born Naked, Indigent and Ignorant, we should be forced to enquire by the help of Reason, into the Nature and Know-

ledge of all these things which are about us, and to Invent and Perfect all such Arts and Manufactories, as are necessary for the support of our Lives. All which things are so numerous, and the ways of attaining to the Knowledge of them so difficult, longsome and uncertain, that it would be but a very small Degree, even of the meanest Art or Science, which any man could attain unto by his own particular Study and Observation, if he were destitute of all these Helps we receive from others, by Word and Writing.

Therefore to facilitat this sore Travel, God hath endued Mankind with a Faculty of Speech, whereby they may Teach and

Communicat to one another, all such Knowledges and Observations as shall be found out by any one of them; that so every one studying a part, and contributing the small Mite of his Observations into the publick Stock, they might at length advance Knowledge and Learning to that Degree, which Humane Nature in this lapsed Estate is capable of. And that there might be some considerable Progress made in this Work at first; God did bestow upon the first Men long Lives, with vigorous Imaginations and solid Judgments, that thereby they might both Acquire great Stocks of Knowledge and Observations, and might convoy them, or communicat them

to many Degrees of their Posterity.

But Men abusing this Blessing of long Life, and exercising their Thoughts only upon Evil and that continually: God in his Justice, was provoked to shorten their Lives, and to confound their Languages, whereby this way of conveying Knowledge by Word of Mouth, and Tradition became very imperfect, and lyable to many Inconveniencies: and therefore that these Means of encreasing Knowledge, and of searching out all the Works of God might be still continued amongst Men; God in his Infinite Mercy, was graciously pleased to teach Men a new Way of communicating their

Thoughts and Words, by Writing; which he did when he did write the Law with his own Finger, upon the two Tables of Stone in Mount *Sinai*, that thereby Men might more easily and universally communicat their Observations to all the rest of Mankind, and might more certainly preserve them to all Posterity.

By this Art of Writing, Knowledge and Learning were very much advanced; till Books became so numerous, and the way of writing with a Pen being both dear and slow, Students could acquire only a small number of them, whereby many Books were neglected and lost, and Learning came to a stand, and

then at length fell into a great Decay, for Men turned their Wits and Studies, rather to collect and understand the Writings and Opinions of the Ancients, than to enquire into the Nature of the things themselves, in so much that all Philosophy was turned into the Opinions of *Aristotle*, and *Plato;* and all Theology was lodged in the Opinion of the Church, or in the Popes Infallibility. Yea, Ignorance prevailed to that Degree, that it was encouraged and preached up, as the Mother of Devotion. But at length Printing, which is a more easy, speedy and cheap way than Writing, was Invented; which remedied all these Inconveniencies of Writing, and so recov-

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ered Learning at its last Gasp, out of its long continued and almost fatal Decay. Since which time, Learning hath taken on as it were a new growth, and though it be not as yet recovered in several Parts, yet many Arts and Sciences are advanced to a far greater Degree, than what they had attained unto amongst the Ancients. From all which Course of Providence, we may clearly perceive, that it is the Will and Design of our Lord and Maker, that by sore Travel, we should search out and know all his wonderful Works, that we may Admire and Adore his Infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and other Perfections in them. As also, we may perceive that a full

and universal communicating of our Thoughts and Observations to one another, is the necessary and ordinary Means appointed by God, whereby we may Attain unto this natural Knowledge; so that whatsoever Inconveniencies do obstruct this free and universal communicating our Thoughts and Instructions to one another, or do hinder Students from Attaining the Knowledge of all that hath been Discovered before them, must of necessity much retard the Advancement of Learning, and hinder the Encrease of Knowledge amongst us; and therefore do deserve our serious Thoughts, and utmost Endeavours to remove them. Some of these In-

conveniencies are, 1. Books are so vastly multiplied, and do so encrease dayly, that most part of Students either want Money to buy any moderat Collection of them; or 2*ly*, they want Convenience to keep them, for Books are very troublesome to Transport from place to place; or 3*ly*, they have them not in due time, while they are young and free from Cares; for after a Man is settled in the World, then the Cares of his Family, and the Affairs of his Calling, do so take up his Mind, that he can have no time nor heart to study. 4. The Money that is bestowed upon Books must be looked upon as lost; and this certainly is a great Discouragement. 5. Many Books

which a Student shall happen to buy, will after perusal, be found little worth, at least for his purpose, whereby he is lamentably disappointed, and loseth both his Money and time. 6. We live at much distance from these famous Towns where most part of Books are Printed, that there are many useful new Books Printed which we never hear of, and these we hear of, cannot be brought home to us without great Expenses and Trouble. 7. Although a Student had all the Advantages that can be reasonably expected in one man, yet he cannot Acquire all the Books in the World, that may relate to the Subject he studies; and so he will still be uneasie

and suspicious, that there may be something worth his Knowledge in these Books he wants. And it is not to be expected, that any man can advance or improve any Art or Science to a full Degree, till first he have a full and comprehensive Knowledge of all that hath been written and discovered of that Subject before him: and therefore compleat and free Libraries are absolutely necessary for the Improving of Arts and Sciences, and for Advancing of Learning amongst us.

For effectuating of this, and for remeding all the fore-named Inconveniencies, it is modestly conceived with submission to better Judgments, that the Found-

ing and Maintaining of Bibliothecks in every Paroch within this Kingdom, will be a most effectual means, for thereby a Student will have compleat Libraries within a few Miles of the place where he shall happen to reside, out of which he may easily furnish himself from time to time, of all sorts of Books fit for his purpose without Money, and that in his youth, while he hath health and strength to Study, and is free from the cares of the World, neither can he be troubled with useless Books, seing he may presently return them to the Bibliotheck and take others; and Lastly, These Libraries in a few years, will be full and compleat, being fur-

nished, not only with all the valuable and usefull Old Books in any Art or Science, but also with all the valuable New Books, so soon as ever they are heard of or seen in the World, as will clearly be demonstrat afterwards.

The Method and particulars which I think necessary for this Founding and Maintaining of Bibliothecks in every Paroch throughout this Kingdom, are these.

1*st*. A convenient place in every Paroch must be set a part, and fitted for keeping of Books.

2*ly*. Every present Minister must give in all his Books, to the Bibliotheck of his own Paroch, at the sight of the Heretors of the Paroch, who shall cause rank

them conform to their volumns, and shall cause take exact Alphabetical Catalogues of them, with the place where, and the time when they are Printed, of which Catalogues, there must be four principal Coppies subscribed by the Minister and Heretors of each Paroch; whereof one Copy shal be kept by the Minister, as an obligation upon the Paroch till he be payed for his Books, another shall be kept by the Heretors in a litle Chist in the Bibliotheck, that it may be an obligation upon the Keeper of the Bibliotheck, to be answerable for all these Books; the third must be kept in the Bibliotheck openly, that any Heretor of the Paroch, or Minister of the

Presbyterie may get a double of it when they please; and the fourth Copy shall be sent to the principal Library at *Edinburgh*, to [be] kept there for several uses.

3dly. For avoiding all debates and difficulties, that may arise between Heretors and Ministers in valuing these Books, it will be fit that some Ministers and Heretors be appointed to draw out a general Catalogue of all the Books in the Kingdom, out of those particular Catalogues that shall be sent in to *Edinburgh* from every Paroch, and to set a certain price upon each Book; which general Catalogues with the price affixed to each Book, shall be Printed and distributed

through every Paroch of the Kingdom, conform to which Catalogue, the Books in every Paroch shall be valued: or there may be laid down some general rules for valuing of Books at so much *per* Sheet, and so much for Binding.

4*tly*. When any Minister shall die, or be removed from one Kirk to an other, then he or his Heirs or Assigneys, shall have right to all the Stipends of that Paroch to which he gave in his Books, ay and while he be payed of their full value conform to the Catalogue: and the Ministers of the Presbytery shall supply that Kirk during that time, but if the Paroch cannot conveniently want a Minister so long, then the

succeeding Minister shall want such a proportional part of the Stipend as shall be thought fit, which shall be payed yearly to the first Minister, his Heirs or assigneys, till the full value of his Books be payed.

5thly. Where the Kirks are vacant, the Ministers of the Presbyterie with the Heretors of the Paroch, shall have power to bestow all the vacant Stipends of that Kirk, upon such Books as they shall think most fit and necessary for the Bibleotheck of that Kirk.

6thly. Each Presbyterie shall endeavour to be a compleat Library within it self, that is, they shall endeavour to have one Copy at least, of every valuable

Book extant in some one Bibliotheck or other within their bounds; wherefore it will be necessar that all the Ministers in one Presbyterie, compare their Catalogues, and consider of what Books they have more Coppies then are needful amongst them, and what Books they think useful; of which they have no Coppies at all, that they may exchange the Books they have for these they want, conform to the value set on each Book by the general Catalogue.

7*thly*. The keeper of the Bibleotheck, who may be the Reader or School-master of the Paroch, must find caution to the Minister and Heretors, to be faithful in keeping the Books, and in

preserving them from all inconveniencies; and he shall not lend out any Book but to an Heretor of the Paroch, or to a Minister of the Presbyterie, or to such persons residing within the Paroch as shall find sufficient caution for all the Books they get out of the Library, and he shall take obligations from them all, that they shall restore the Books in good condition, and within such a set time as may be sufficient for reading the Book, but within one Moneth at farthest; that so an Heretor may not defraud the rest of the use of any Book. And for preventing the imbazling the Books of thir Libraries, it is fit there be a note written upon the reverse of the Title page, and

on the last leaf of each Book Subscribed by the Minister, declaring that the Book belongeth to the Bibleotheck of such a Paroch, so that wherever any Book shall be found wanting the Title page and the last leaf, it may be suspected to be stollen from the Libraries, and so may be confiscat to their use.

8*thly*. It will be convenient that there be a Book binder in every Presbyterie, to bind all the Books that belong to that Presbyterie, for which end he must be provided with a House, and all the Instruments fit for his Trade, and with some small Stipend yearly to maintain him; and then whatsoever Books he shall bind he shall be payed only

for the materials, but nothing for his work; or the keepers of the Bibleotheck or Ministers Servants may be taught to bind Books, and may easiely bind all the new Books that shall be given in to that Library in Sheets.

9thly. It will be convenient that all the Bibliothicks in the Kingdom observe the same method of ranking and placeing their Books: which method may be to rank the Books according to their name and number, in the general Catalogue, which name and number must be written upon a piece of paper, and battered to the back of the Book, or to some leaf of it, that it may be easiely seen and read, by any person that comes into the Bi-

bliothick, that so Ministers or Students, when they shall happen to remove from one Paroch or Bibliothick to another, they may not be at a loss where to find any Book, for by this method they will presently know in what place every Book should stand.

These are all the particulars which I think necessary for the present for founding of Bibliothicks in every Paroch, but for the maintaining and promoting these it will be necessary further, that

10*thly*. One Moneths Cess to be payed yearly, to be settled as a Fond for buying and Printing, all such Books New or Old, as shall be judged valuable and

usefull to be distributed through the Kingdom, and every Bibliotheck in the Kingdom shall get a Copy of every Book that shall be printed: the one half of this Moneths Cess must be payed by the Heretors conform to their Valuations, the other half by the Ministers conform to the proportions of their Stipends.

11*thly*. This Money or Fond must be entrusted to some honest Person or Persons, who shall therewith Erect a Printing-House, and Paper Manufactory, and shall settle and maintain a Correspondence with all the Printing presses abroad throughout *Europe*, and shall bring home some Coppies of all the Books that shall be Printed, as

soon as possible, and shall Reprint all such Books whether New or Old, as shall be judged fitting, or worthy to be distributed through the Kingdom, and they shall be oblidged to give up Accompts how the Money is bestowed, from time to time to such Ministers and others, as shall be appointed to receive, and examine the same.

12*thly*. A Commission of the General Assembly must be appointed, to Revise all the New Books that are brought home from time to time, and to give some short Account of them in Print, or to employ such persons as they shall judge most fit for that Work: and to Revise all the Old Books, and to determine

what Books shall be Printed every Moneth, and to receive and examine the Printers Accompts.

This is a Method which I think will be both easie and effectual for establishing, and promoting of Bibliothecks in every Paroch throughout this Kingdom, neither do I foresee any material Objection, that can be made against any particular Article of it.

For it shall be Objected against the second Article, by some of the present Ministers, that if they shall happen hereafter to be removed from their paroch to another, they will be at a great loss for want of these Books, with which they have been accustomed of a long time.

This is easily answered, for

when a Minister is removed from one paroch to another, he will immediatly have a right to all, or at least a part of the Stipends of that paroch, till he be payed for his Books, and then with that Money he may buy what Books he thinks most necessary for himself, and give in to the Library of that other paroch to which he shal be Transplanted, and be payed for them after his removal.

It may be further Objected by the Ministers, that when the publick is Debitor, it is sometimes difficult to get payment; but this Objection is groundless here for in this case the publick is not Debitor, but every privat man is Debitor for his proportion of the

vacant Stipends, to the Minister himself, or his Heirs and Assigneys, ay and while he be payed for all the Books he gave in to the Bibliotheck of that paroch.

But that which should move the Ministers to comply willing with this Article is, that thereby they both retain the use of their Books, and also secure the value of them, to themselves or their Heirs, whereas otherwise they might be lost or Sold for very little.

It may be Objected by others against the tenth Article, that one Moneths Cess, which amounts to 72000 pounds *Scots* by year, will be too great a Fond for buying and printing of Books yearly.

To this I answer, that if it be too great it must be so, either in respect of the *Books* it will buy and print, or in respect of the *Persons* that may pay it; but it is not too great in respect of the *Books* it will buy and print, but rather too little, for the printing of an large Book as the five volumns of *Pools Criticks* upon the Bible, will more than exhaust all, and then what shal bring home New Books and Re-print them, and what shall maintain the Correspondence with all the printing places in *Europe*.

Neither is it too great in respect of the *Persons* that must pay it, for the half of it which is to be payed by the Heretors, is only the 1/20 part of their valued

Rent, and their valued Rent is ordinarly but the third part of their real Rent, so that an Heretor of one thousand and two hundred pounds *Scots* of valued Rent which is commonly 3600 pounds of real Rent, shall pay only ten pounds *Scots* yearly, for maintaining and promoting of these Bibliothecks. And certainly it would be very unworthy of any Gentleman of such a Rent, to grudge the paying of ten pound *Scots* yearly, when for it, he, his Children and Tennents may have the free use of a well furnished Library, and of all the new Books & Gazets so soon as ever they are Printed. And I believe most part of Gentlemen bestow more than this Propor-

tion of their Rents upon Books yearly, & yet are but very insufficiently provided. Yea, many Noblemen and Gentlemen bestow more upon News; so that this half Months Cess will be no new Burden upon them, but a more effectual and profitable way of bestowing that Money upon Books and News, which now is Expended to little or no purpose.

As for the other half Months Cess which is to be payed by the Ministers, certainly none of them will grudge at it, seing any Ministers Share of it (even although it were divided amongst them by equal Parts) will amount only to 36 pounds *Scots*, which is not so much as the

yearly Annualrent of that Sum, which now a Minister must necessarly be supposed to bestow upon Books, before he can be any way tolerably furnished for his Studies. For supposing there be 1000 Ministers in *Scotland* that shall have Libraries for their own use; then each Ministers Share of this 36000 pounds *Scots*, will be only 36 pound, which is only the Annualrent of 600 pounds *Scots:* and I believe there are few present Ministers, but have bestowed more than this Sum upon Books, so that the half Months Cess upon them, is not to be looked upon as a Burthen, but as a way to preserve their Money, seing by this Method, the yearly Annualrent of a small

Sum of Money, will furnish them with a compleat Library, and incomparably more Books, than both the Stock and Annualrent of a far greater Sum can do otherways.

But further, there are several other Considerations which may make the Ministers willing condescend to this Article; for either they may prevail with the king & parliament to ordain this half Months Cess to be payed out of the Bishops Rents, or to lay it on upon the Teinds of the Kingdom, which do justly belong to the Maintainance of the Worship of God, or some honest hearted Patron Titular of the Teinds, may Gift or Mortifie as much as may free his Minister of his Pro-

portion of it. But though none of these should succeed at present, yet the Tacks of the Teinds must run out at length, and then the Kirk will be sufficiently provided, not only to pay this half Months Cess, but even to pay the WHOLE, and free the Heretors of their SHARE of it.

It may be objected by others, that the Fond will be too little, and the Work will be but small and contemptible. But it is answered, That though it may be small at the beginning, yet it will not be despicable, for we know that *Rome* was not all built in one day, and it is demonstrable, that these Libraries will by this Fond in a few years become very great and considerable, so that the

very meanest of them may compare with the most famous Libraries in the World; for this Fond will Print nine or ten Sheets of Paper dayly, which is enough for any man to read; and this 10 Sheets dayly, will be 3000 Sheets yearly, which will be ten large Volumns of 300 Sheets to each Volumn; so that in 100 years, this will be 1000 large Volumns, consisting of three hundred thousand Sheets of Paper; which with the Books that will be given in to the Libraries from time to time, by the Ministers and Heretors, may do much to comprehend all the valuable Books extant.

But further, this Degree of Perfection in these Libraries, may

be much sooner attained, if the King and Parliament shall think fit to Augment this Cess upon the Heretors for some years, or for Printing of some select Books; or if a more easie and speedy way of Printing can be Invented than what is now in use, which I am perswaded may be done, if men of Sense were encouraged to apply themselves unto it.

Lastly, it may be objected that the different Perswasions amongst Ministers may mar all this Work; But it is answered, That though the different Perswasions amongst Ministers, may obstruct the free borrowing and lending of Books amongst them, yet that needs be no hin-

derance to the settling and increasing of the Bibliothecks in every Paroch, or to the paying of their Shares for maintaining of the Printing House, and for Printing such Books as shall be thought most necessary.

What hath been said, I hope is sufficient to convince any man, that there is no difficulty in this Work, if we be willing to set about it. Therefore I shall in the next place, lay before you some Considerations taken, 1. From the Advantagiousness of the Work. 2. From the Honourableness of it. And 3. From the Duty that lies upon us to provide our Ministers in all things necessary for their Ministry, which may serve for Arguments to per-

swade all persons willingly and cordially to set about this Work.

1. This Establishing of Bibliothecks in every Paroch, will not only remedy the forementioned Inconveniencies and Difficulties of Students, but it will be several ways Advantageous to the Countrey, For 1. It will be a considerable Manufactory, and will Maintain many People at Work. 2. It will keep all that Money in the Kingdom, which now goes out for buying of Books and Paper. 3. It will encourage young Men to follow their Studies in their own Countrey, and thereby prevent their spending their Fortunes Abroad, and many other considerable Inconveniencies that young Men are ex-

posed unto in strange Countreys. 4. It will allure and provoke Gentlemen to bestow their spare Hours in reading of new Books, which may prove a good Means to restrain them from Gaming and Drinking, by preventing that uneasie and wearisome Idleness of Mind, which is the Parent of these, and many other Enormities. 5. It will in a short time, carry away the whole Trade of Printing from all the rest of *Europe*.

But 2. As this Establishing of Bibliothecks in every Paroch will be Advantageous, so it will be very Honourable to this Countrey. For 1. We shall not only be the first and the only Nation for a while, that shal have this

regular and useful plenty of Books. But 2. Hereby all sorts of Learning will mightily encrease and flourish amongst us, and though we be not a great or a rich People, yet we may be a wise and a learned People. Yea further, these Libraries in two or three hundred years will be so full and compleat, that the Most Famous and Magnificent Libraries in the World, shal not outdo the meanest Library in any Paroch of this Kingdom, for numbers of valuable and useful Books, as hath been already demonstrat.

3. If it be our Duty to provide our Ministers with all things necessary for them as a competent Stipend, Manse and Gleib,

that they being free from worldly Cares, may have time to study and Instruct their People. Then certainly it must much more be our Duty, to provide them with competent Libraries of the most useful Books, seing without these they cannot study, nor be fitted sufficiently for Instructing their People in the Truths of their Religion.

4*thly*. Seing God hath made all men by nature desirous of Knowledge, undoubtedly the satisfying of this desire, must be a considerable part of our natural felicity; for the only delight of our Souls, which are our better part, in which the Body doth not partake, is the delight She taketh in Knowledge and Con-

templation. And seing God hath so ordered it, that the most part of our Knowledge should be communicat to us from our Forefathers, and Contemporaries, especially by their Books and Writings, It doth necessarly follow, that the establishing and promoting of Libraries in every Paroch, whereby the use of all sorts of Books may be rendered most free and universal, and may be perfectly secured to all our posterity, will be a very effectual means of increasing Knowledge and Learning amongst us, and of helping us, and our posterity to search out all the Works of our God, that we may admire and adore his Infinit Wisdom and Goodness, in making them

such, and in so wonderfully disposing of them for his own purposes and Glory, which seems to be one principal end, for which our Blessed Maker hath made us rational Creatures.

These things being duely considered, I hope what hath been said will be sufficient, to perswade all lovers, and encouragers of Learning, that this founding and promoting of Bibliothecks in every Paroch throughout this Kingdom, is both necessary and easie, advantagious and honourable, our Interest and our Duty.

FINIS

TRACT THE SECOND

A COPY OF A LETTER ANENT A PROJECT, FOR ERECTING A LIBRARY IN EVERY PRESBYTRY, OR AT LEAST COUNTY, IN THE HIGHLANDS

YOU may remember, That I had some Discourse with you, when I was in *Scotland;* About Libraries for the *Highlands*, at which time also I shewed you a Schem, about ordering the Libraries. Since that time, I have not been unmindful, of what then I only in general hinted at. My Bodily distempers, together with the small hopes I had, of any great success, hindred me from setting on foot this design; which now at last I have ventured upon.

The great examples of Charity, which this Kingdom affords, particularly in what concerns Libraries for the Plantations, have animated and disposed me, to fall to work, and to try what may be done for those in our Native Country, who need such helps and encouragements as much as any. I need not say much about the Reasons for this Undertaking. The Printed Paper which I send you, will show how great and important they are, and it is likely, your own knowledge and observation, will furnish you with others.

I thought fit to mention the kinds of Books which we intend to purchase; That they who give Books, and not Money may

know what sort of Treatises we aim at, and may not put us off with trash. As for Popish Books and perhaps some others likeways, tho they be not fit for the weaker sort of People; yet for the Library of a Divine they are convenient and necessary, that so they may be the more able to deal with the Adversary. I suppose no body of any discretion or Learning will question this.

At the end of the Printed Paper, you find mention made of the Schem I hinted at; I thought it necessary, ere I make it publick to send it to you, to peruse it, and shew it to the Assembly, or Commission of the Kirk, that such Additions or Alterations, may be made as shall

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be judged necessary, that so they who intend to assist us, in this Work, may be assured, care will be taken, by those who are in the Government to secure and preserve their charity, and to doe all they can to render the Books useful.

Tho some of the Rules, which are proposed to be observed, in ordering the Libraries, may at first Reading, seem hard, yet upon due Consideration, it will be found very necessary, to use a great deal of strictness, and exactness in this Affair. They who know the World, but a little, and have seen the fate of some Libraries, will Reckon the outmost precaution, we can use little enough to prevent what

otherwayes, will be unavoidable. It's a work of no small difficulty, to purchase a parcel of good Books, for publick advantage, nor is it less difficult to preserve and secure them for posterity, when they are purchased.

It would be of some advantage to this design, if you and some others of the Ministry, would write to some Ministers of the Presbyterian way, at *London* to move them to concurr in this Affair: And if to all this were added some endeavours in *Scotland*, to procure some Books, or Money to buy them, we might then hope to get Libraries erected in Each Presbytry-Seat of the *Highlands*, and perhaps for *Ork-*

ney and *Zetland*, whose need of Books is likewayes apparent.

I know your sence of these things, and your Zeal to promote solid Piety, and useful Learning, will prompt you to do your outmost in this undertaking: And no doubt, they who are inspired with true Principles of Charity, and are concerned for the interest of common Christianity, will with all chearfulness, accept of this or any other the like opportunity of doing good.

For my own part, I am willing to doe what I can, in this design which I know to be very necessary. And if after all, the success do not answer my wishes, I will sit down satisfied, with my having done the best I could,

which I know my good GOD will accept of.

I am not insensible of the opposition and discouragement which this or any other pious and useful Design is sure to meet with. Satan will not be wanting to doe what he can to hinder what tends to the weakening his Interest in the World, of this I have seen too many instances to be daunted thereby. If the Love of GOD prevail in us it will make us despise all such Rubbs and Discouragements, and to goe on in the strength of the LORD, who will not fail us, or forsake us. He often by weak means and despicable Instruments brings mighty things to pass.

They who know the low estate

of Religion in the World, and how fast Popery and Deism, yea and Atheism, prevail everywhere, will think themselves oblidged heartily and zealously to concurr, with all those who take any Rational and feasible course to propagate Christian Knowledge, and to hinder the restless and Wicked Endeavours, of those who labour to corrupt if not to root out our Holy Religion.

Perhaps you have heard what excellent Designs are formed both by the Corporation, and by the society for propagating Christian Knowledge. They are settleing a Correspondence with some Learned and Pious Divines, of Forreign Churches and

have sent them a great many Treatises, some of which have been translated into other Languages, for the benefite of these who understand not English.

And whereas the Plantations have been generally neglected, there is now great care taken, to have Ministers sent amongst them and Schools Erected, and good Books provided for them.

I send you the Printed Paper, together with the Project, about ordering the Libraries, that you may have time to prepare matters relating to this designe before the Assembly meets, that what is necessary to be done, may be dispatched with greater conveniencie, amidst the croud of other business. It is fit to let

me know, as soon as you can, what the Assembly resolves, and agrees to, in this matter, that so they that wish well to this Undertaking, may be encouraged to goe on with chearfulness, when they see that their labour and charge will not be lost.

As to what is said, in the Printed Paper about the poverty of our Nation, which is given as the reason, why we trouble Strangers with this affair. I hope none of my Countrie men will take offence at it; The Truth of this is too much felt at home, and too well known abroad, to be denyed. It were well if such sufferings did awaken those who are asleep in their Sin, and cure

such as are apt to be so fond and proud of perishing things. But if any are so vain and foolish as too Censure this Paragraph, Their best way of confutation, is to take an effectual and speedy course, to provide a competent number of Libraries, for such parts of our native Countrie, as need them most. There is none amongst us here, but will be glad, to see this work Undertaken and finished by these in *Scotland* whose concern and interest it is cheifly to have it done.

May our good God direct and prosper, all those who sincerly set themselves, to do the best they can, for his Glory and the real happiness, and welfare of

men. In which Prayer I know you will readily joyne with,

Your affectionat Brother.

AN ACCOUNT OF A DESIGN ABOUT ERECTING SOME

LIBRARIES

IN THE HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND, FOR THE USE CHIEFLY OF MINISTERS AND PROBATIONERS

THE Reasons for setting on foot this Design, are,

I. The great scarcity of Books among the Ministers in those Parts, some of them hardly having so many as are worth twenty shillings.

II. The small Provision many of them have in the *Highlands* (tho in other parts of the Kingdom, Ministers are for the most part, much better provided for) so that very few of them can spare anything out of their poor

livings toward the purchasing of Books.

III. The great industry of the *Romish Missionaries* amongst them makes it necessary for them to be tolerably provided with such Books, as may enable them to encounter their Adversaries.

IV. The gross ignorance of the People in those parts, together with some late endeavours to seduce the Inhabitants of the Isle of *Hirta* into a state of Heathenism, make it very necessary that they should be provided with such Treatises as prove the Truth of the Christian Religion.

V. The Excellent Parts and Capacities of the Ministers generally throughout the *High-*

lands; as they invite generous and charitable Persons to afford them what assistance they can, in this kind; so they give good ground to expect much fruit from such a Charity.

VI. As such Libraries will be of extraordinary Advantage to the Ministers, so they will be greatly useful to such young men as intend for the Sacred Office, who cannot acquire any tolerable measure of necessary and useful knowledge, unless they are furnish'd with a sufficient number of good Books.

VII. To all which must be added their great distance from all such places where they might either buy or borrow such Books as are useful to them.

To Answer in part the above-mention'd Design, it is intended, to have one Library in each County of the *Highlands;* except where there are but few Parishes, in which case, one Library is at first to serve two or three Counties: Their Number may be afterwards increased as Encouragement is given.

The Money or Books which shall be given, may be put into the hands of Mr. *Taylor* a Book-seller at the Ship, or of Mr. *Robinson* at the Golden Lion in St. *Paul's* Church-yard, who will give the Benefactors a note of what Money or Books shall be intrusted to them.

If it be asked, Why we trouble strangers with this affair, and do

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not transact it altogether among our own Country-men? The Answer in short is this; The Nation's poverty, (occasioned chiefly by their great losses at Sea, the decay of Trade, the great Dearth of Corn, and the Death of Cattle for some Years together, to say nothing of several other things which might be named) renders the People generally unable to do much by way of Charity; nevertheless there are not wanting those amongst them, who amidst their straights and wants, are forward to promote this or any other good Design, even beyond their Power.

As for those good People in both Kingdoms, who sometime

ago, did freely and largely contribute towards the Printing of Bibles in *Irish*, for the use of the poorer sort of *Highlanders*, (the success of which Charitable Work, thro' God's Blessing, hath been very great even beyond our hopes) it is not doubted but they will give all encouragement to this undertaking, either by bestowing such useful Books as they can spare, or by giving money to buy them. And altho' we know that the Humble and Devout followers of our great Master *Jesus*, desire not to be seen of Men, nor to have their works published to the World; yet as a Motive to others and in Testimony of Gratitude towards those who encourage this good

Design, we propose to set down in each Book, and in the Catalogues of each Library, the Names of the Benefactors.

Rules *about ordering some* Liberaries *intended for the* Highlands.

1. Care is to be taken, the Books be deposited in such places as may best suit the exigences of the Country, especially at such Presbytry-seats as ly in the center of the bounds, which are to be supplyed.

2. That they be intrusted to the care of the Minister and Schoolmaster of the place, unless there be two ministers Officiating there, in which case they must have the charge of the Books.

3. That the Books be kept un-

der Lock and Key in good and strong presses, to be placed in a pure and dry Air free from dampness.

4. That each Press have two Locks and two Keys, whereof one Key is to be in the hands of the Minister, and the other of the School-master unless there be two Ministers serving at the place; and then each of them may have a Key.

5. Some Books being of so general Use, that to lend them abroad, were the ready way to frustrate the Design. Therefore it may be specified by an Act of the Synod or Presbytry of the bounds, what books in their list may not be lent abroad.

6. That no Books be lent to

any, but Preachers or School-masters, or Students living within such Bounds, as shall be assigned by the Presbytry, Synod or Assembly.

7. That he who borrows any Book, Consign a fourth part more than the real Value of it; thereby to prevent the turning the Libraries into book-sellers Shops.

8. Besides, the Borrower of any Treatise, ought to enter his name into a Book of the Library to be provided for that purpose together with the time in which he is to restore it, upon pain of forfeiting the Money Consigned. This seems likeways needful to prevent the embezelling of the Books.

9. That they who live at places 15 or 20 Miles distant be obliged to restore the Book they borrow within a Fourtnight, if an 8*vo*. within three weeks, if a 4*to*. within a Month or 6 Weeks, if a Folio. They who live a great way further, may be allowed a week or fourtnight more, but a long time ought not to be granted, that so others who need the keep of such Books, may have the benefit of them.

10. When it happens, that the Money which was consigned is forfeited, care should be taken, that it be not bestowed without the Advice of the Synod or Presbytry of the bounds, or of the Committee appointed for such occasions.

11. That each Presbytry and Synod, have a Catalogue of the Books appropriated to their bounds.

12. That besides the above-mentioned Catalogue, there be likeways a List of the Books in each Library, fairly writen upon a large Sheet of Paper or Parchment, and placed conveniently in the Apartment where the Presbytry or Synod of the bounds does meet; that so both Ministers and Probationers may the more readily know what Books there are to be borrowed when they have occasion for them.

13. That the Presbytry once every half Year, visit the Library or Libraries of their bounds; and that they make report to

the Synod of their Diligence, and in what condition they find the Books &c.

14. That the Synod likeways once in two or three Years, send some of their Number to inspect the publick Library or Libraries in their bounds, and to report in what case they are, and how these and other necessary Rules, which shall be thought upon are observed.

15. That the Library-Keepers do not presume to exchange the Books.

16. If any Book which is lent, be spoilt, torne, or in any sort abused. In this case, they who have the charge of the Books, shall not restore the Money Consigned, till first they have ac-

quainted the Presbytry or Synod of the bounds, where it may be determined what shall be done.

17. That care be taken, the persons who shall be appointed Depositaries of the Books be Responsable Men and of blameless Reputation.

18. That they who are intrusted with the Charge of the Books, give good Security to leave them in as good case as they were in, when they were first intrusted with them.

19. That in case of the removeal of the persons who have this Trust, they be obliged to make good what Books are wanting, or spoilt and abused, or in case of their decease their Heirs do it.

20. That they who have charge of the Books, may know what Money to require to be Consigned by those who borrow any of them, it will be convenient either for the Synod of the bounds or some other Ecclesiastical Judicature, by some of their Number best skilled in Books, to assign the prices of each book in their publick Library as they may be bought in *Scotland*, withal reckoning for the charge of Transporting them. The prices of the Books may be inserted in the Catalogues.

21. If it happen that any one, or both the persons who have charge of the Books, have occasion to go a great way from home. It will be necessary the

Keyes be left behind them, in the hands of persons of Integrity and Discretion, who may either lend out or receive in the Books, always observing the Condition abovementioned.

22. If the Minister or Schoolmasters place become Void by Removeal, Death, or otherways; The Presbytry of the bounds, shall nominate others in their stead, for the charge and trust of the Books.

23. That upon the delivering of the Books at first to those, who shall be intrusted with the Keeping of them, the condition of every Book be, as to Binding and otherways, expressed in writing, by the inspection of two or more, who shall be deputed

by the Presbytry or Synod of the bounds for that effect.

24. That for the greater security, the List of the Books be insert in the Register of the Presbytry and Synod of the bounds.

25. That no Gentleman who is not a Benefactor to the Library, have the priviledge of borrowing any Books.

26. No Book shall be lent, unless the person who comes for it bring with him conveniencies to carry it without damnage.

27. No person at any one time, shall have more then two books.

28. If any do neglect to return any Book by the time limited, the Librarian shall take care to send him notice, the charge of which message he shall pay, be-

sides the forfeiture.

29. That it be marked on each Book, to what Library and County it belongs.

Courteous Reader,

Advertisement

The Author of this Letter, is a Person who hath a great Zeal for propagating the Knowledge of GOD, in the Highlands *of* Scotland, *and is the same who did promote Contributions for the Printing of* Bibles *in the* Irish *Language and sent so many of them down to* Scotland; *And there is no news he more earnestly desires to know, than what the G. A. doth whenever it meeteth, for promoting the Interests of the Gospel in the Highlands.*

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Renewed books are subject to immediate recall.

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